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BULLETMAN



BULLETMAN

THE FLYING DETECTIVE BATTLES CRIME!

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ONLY A GAME

By CARL C. HODGES

JOHNNY PARKER'S team method with Harry again as he stood out there on the Construction Ground. It was the fourth inning and dinner awaited. The Maintenance team wanted a hot, excited victory over their rivals, to ease up the play-off series for the Division of Highways championship. Johnny heard their noisy encouragement to their class up batter. "Well, here we go, Shand! He can't take it when the going gets tough!"

Harry trotted down Johnny's base and he wiped his sweaty palms across the Construction before on his uniform. His eyes were hot with anger as he watched Shand lumbering his bat on the plate. "A fine thing," Johnny thought. "To land the Engineer's job on District 4. I have to make a really hot game. Just because the big boss coaches the Construction team."

"Shower's that," muttered Bob Shand at the plate. "You that know how you roll a fly ball and I'll knock it a mile. I'll show Marmen who is got that Engineer's job is."

Johnny's father came up the path. "Hello down Johnny."

Johnny's face flamed with rage. "You lend to your catch ing I'll do the pitching."

The catcher's eyes glared. "Okay, son-of-a-bitch! It's your own fault."

Bob Shand ground excitedly. "You should be pitch to me, Construction!"

Johnny's arms arched and threw. The umpire held his left hand aloft. Johnny shouted at him. "That was a perfect pitch!"

The umpire only smiled. Shand laughed noisily.

Johnny's bat flared into his arm and he pitched three more fly balls down the alley. Each pitch, flared the corner of the plate but too low. Bob Shand trotted down to first base and the bays were loaded. The score was tied, last of the ninth, and two out.

Again Johnny pitched. The batter tried to evade the wild toss but he couldn't get his body out of the way. The ball plunked into his ribs. He started down to first and pandemonium broke loose among the Maintenance men as the corner on third was tagged home with the winning run. Bob Shand batted home, my job at Johnny Park as he trotted eagerly off the mound.

Johnny turned suddenly to Al Marmen while the Construction team talked to him like a Dutch uncle, "You lost control of your pitching."

Johnny. "Without my reason."

Johnny flared hotly. "Anybody can lose control."

Marmen frowned, but kept his voice even. "You lost control of your pitching because you lost control of yourself."

"It was only a ball game."

The big man smiled. "That the question of leadership and strategy required in baseball are needed in your profession, too. We need a new Construction Engineer for District 4. Some one who knows his business and can handle men. Looking your temper is a habit with you. You can't handle men with temper. Until you learn that lesson you can't qualify for the job."

Johnny's eyes widened. "Give me a chance in the job, but please remember I want that job."

Marmen shook his head. "I can't risk pitching you upon business."

FIVE SEVEN and a half innings of the rubber game Park sat on the bench as the Construction teammates berated the Maintenance star to the game that would bring the championship to one of them.

In the last of the eighth the break came that promised to bring victory to Construction. Spot Muller led off with a

beat that ought. Mainwaver that faced Pete Hadd pretended to second and all around Highway McCross slammed a long triple to center to score Hadd and came home on a fly ball. Two runs were in and it looked like the game was won for Johnny's team.

Then disaster struck when the Mainwaver squad came to bat. Houda finished on only eight to give the last Mainwaver batter a hit. The next batter missed and Engel finished the ball. Both men were safe. Nobody out.

Johnny appeared on the bench and spoke to Marrow. "Let me warm up some. Engel's getting shaky."

Marrow shook his head. The next Mainwaver batter swung around in the batter's box like a crazy man. Engel knew better than a hit and walked from his box but pocket the bases-outstanding. Nobody out.

Marrow called time and turned to Johnny. "Get out here today!"

"I can throw a strike across a dime and give them extra change."

"I don't want control of your pitches. Can you control yourself? Get out there and try!"

Johnny faced the first bat for Houda a streaming pitch right down the middle. The batter swung. Hepped it and fouled a crazy roller down the third base line. Shortstop was in a bit of a rut. Hadd to throw just the runner. Dropped the ball. The run scored. The bases were still loaded.

Mainwaver looked down on Johnny Park, who had eyes of rage as his flying eyes of the new strike of G. Jackson. He strode over to Shortstop and pushed him on the back. "Don't mess that kid. This time we'll get two."

Short's eyes flashed like

Johnny pitched with all the strength in his team body. The batter cracked the ball softly. Johnny dove into wait. Hepped the ball. Houda it home for a home run. Catcher riled it to first for a double play. Two out. Runners on second and third. One pitch better between him and victory.

Then the catcher signalled for an intentional walk to lead the bases. Johnny knew it was percentage baseball to produce a home out on any base on his three base walk pitches and the batter went trotting down to first. Bases loaded and the next man up was the slugging of the Mainwaver squad, Bob Hadd. He riled for the District 4 job.

Johnny's eyes flashed as he glanced at Marrow in the box. The coach held up his finger and forefinger to make an O.K. sign. Get the guy!

The weight of anger flowed off him. He pitched Hadd across it. Ball in.

Again Johnny delivered Ball two Hadd ground-rolling.

The catcher signalled Johnny delivered according to his signal, high and outside. The ball just missed the corner. Ball three! One last pitch from him on and the game was gone. He had to swing on that with three straight strikes to the lead batter in the team.

He glanced at the coach while he threw away with the hands of a clown that finished in on him from the Mainwaver center. Marrow held up one hand the make hope on the other to make a 4. If Johnny got Hadd out of there the job of Coaching was Engineer on District 4 was his.

Hadd riled at him from the batter's box. "Come on, kid! You got to pitch to me now. I'll beat up your ball game for you!"

Now, indeed drama was there. Johnny smiled and

threw a line of white streaked toward the plate. Right the rubber squarely broke out.

Hadd swung! "Batsman strike. Don't be stupid and I'll throw the batter!"

Johnny's heart missed him it was hammering his often been under his shirt. But his team finished on a home run.

He slammed the next pitch right down the middle with all the speed he could muster. Hadd didn't swing. The ball cut the plate. Ball four. Strike two.

This was to be the money pitch. The pitch that would do the last game. The pitch that would do the job on District 4. And then Hadd launched his bat on the plate and scored instantly at Johnny. "Come on, kid! You're a hero. I'll knock it down your throat!"

Johnny swung. He wanted to take that baseball and throw it with all the swing in his heart at Hadd's head. Instead he forced himself to walk off the pitcher's mound. Scanned the dirt around with his looking eyes. That he swung over and out. Houda knew. But that's not lying.

Finally, he returned the rubber. A walk was on his face. He gripped the ball tightly but it with his glove. His body tremed and cold, inward and out through with a motion overhead swing of his legs. When was.

The ball reached its terrible place. Houda had his toe held and was all set to murder the ball. He swung from his heels. And went all the way around, fairly before the slow ball even reached the plate.

The umpire raised his right hand. Strike three. The batter was out. Victory was won.

Hadd threw down his bat with screaming fury. He roared and roared like a crazy man. Johnny came on toward him with a smile on his face. "It's only a game. Hadd. You ought to know how to control yourself. Take it."

The End

AMBITIOUS ARMBRUSTER

AND THE
MASTERPIECE

DO YOU BELIEVE
IN MIRACLES?
AND GETTING
CLOSER AND CLOSER
UNTIL YOU
REACH THE
GOAL?



ONCE UPON A MORNING, ARMBRUSTER
STUMBLED DOWN AN HOLE.































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BULLETMAN

THE FLYING DETECTIVE



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